

MEMBER DAY

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC, NOVEMBER 21, 2025

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C O N T E N T S

	Page
Hearing held on November 21, 2025	1

OPENING STATEMENTS

Walberg, Hon. Tim, Chairman, Committee on Education and Workforce ...	1
Prepared statement of	2
Scott, Hon. Robert C. “Bobby”, Ranking Member, Committee on Education and Workforce	3
Prepared statement of	4

WITNESSES

Fine, Hon. Randy, a Representative in Congress from the State of Florida:	5
Prepared statement of	6
Hayes, Hon. Jahana, a Representative in Congress from the State of Connecticut:	8
Bonamici, Hon. Suzanne, a Representative in Congress from the State of Oregon:	9
Dexter, Hon. Maxine, a Representative in Congress from the State of Oregon:	11
Prepared statement of	12
Hern, Hon. Kevin, a Representative in Congress from the State of Oklahoma:	14
Prepared statement of	16
Mann, Hon. Tracey, a Representative in Congress from the State of Kansas:	17
Prepared statement of	18
Taylor, Hon. David J., a Representative in Congress from the State of Ohio:	19
Prepared statement of	21

ADDITIONAL SUBMISSIONS

Barr, Hon. Andy, a Representative in Congress from the State of Kentucky:	
Prepared statement of	25
Lee, Hon. Susie, a Representative in Congress from the State of Nevada:	
Prepared statement of	25
Takano, Hon. Mark, a Representative in Congress from the State of California:	
Prepared statement of	27

MEMBER DAY

Friday, November 21, 2025

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:02 a.m., in Room 2261, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Tim Walberg (Chairman of the Committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Walberg, Taylor, Hern, Mann, Fine, Scott, Dexter, Bonamici, DeSaulnier, Hayes, and Mannion.

Staff present: Vlad Cerga, Director of Information Technology; Halle Greenbaum, Staff Assistant; Amy Raaf Jones, Director of Education And Human Services Policy; Libby Kearns, Press Assistant; Trey Kovacs, Professional Staff Member; Campbell Ladd, Clerk; R.J. Laukitis, Staff Director; Danny Marca, Director of Information Technology; Audra McGeorge, Communications Director; Ethan Pann, Deputy Press Secretary and Digital Director; Sara Robertson, Press Secretary; Katherine Anne Russo, Director of Member Services and Coalitions; Ann Vogel, Director of Operations; James Whittaker, General Counsel; Amaris Benavidez, Minority Professional Staff; Ellie Berenson, Minority Press Assistant; Ilana Brunner, Minority General Counsel; Ni'Aisha Banks, Minority Staff Assistant; Phoebe Ball, Minority Senior Counsel; Nikhita Chinmay, Minority Intern; Bryan Rashage Green, Minority Director of Education Policy; Lilo Goodmanson, Minority Intern; Natalie Glezen, Minority Running Start Fellow; Emanuel Kimble, Minority Professional Staff; Scott Estrada, Minority Professional Staff; Samantha Wilkerson, Minority Professional Staff; Stephanie Lalle, Minority Communications Director; Jessica Schieder, Minority Economic Policy Advisor; Andre Lindsay, Minority Professional Staff; Kwesi Matthews, Minority Einstein Fellow; Kevin McDermott, Minority Director of Labor Policy; Marie McGrew, Minority Press Assistant; Eleazar Padilla, Minority Staff Assistant; Mason Pesek, Minority Labor Policy Counsel; and Theresa Tilling-Thompson, Minority Professional Staff.

Chairman WALBERG. The Committee will please come to order. A quorum is present.

The Committee meets today pursuant to notice.

Without objection, the chair may recess the Committee at any point.

Thank you all for being here for this year's Member hearing. Today is about listening. Today is about listening. I will say that again. Member Day gives our colleagues who are not on this Committee a chance to share what is happening back home, the stories,

the ideas, and challenges shaping their communities. These real-world perspectives help guide our work as we shape policies that actually meet people where they are at.

Every district is different, and no one knows its needs better than the Member who represents it. That is why your input matters. It keeps this committee grounded in what is really happening across the country.

I maintain my belief that the Committee on Education and Workforce is the hardest working committee in Congress. If you had an opportunity to look at our schedule of hearings this week, you would agree with us. Far this year, we passed 29 bills and resolutions, held dozens of hearings, led more than 50 oversight letters, and played a pivotal role in the reconciliation process that saved Americans trillions of dollars.

In fact, the Working Families Tax Cuts tackle the rising costs of higher education and student debt by increasing accountability for colleges and universities and making education more affordable. The bill also strengthens our Nation's workforce by increasing access to high-quality job training courses, programs that prepare students for well-paying careers without forcing them into baccalaureate degree. If America is going to lead in the 21st century, it needs to ensure students have practical skills aligned with high-demand jobs.

In addition, we have pushed back against the radical indoctrination happening in schools, protected women's sports, deterred foreign influence that allowed our enemies to infiltrate our universities, and combatted the disturbing rise of antisemitism on our college campuses.

On the workforce side, the committee has advanced legislation to improve the lives of American workers, reduced burdens on small businesses, address critical workforce shortages, and stimulate economic growth. The committee remains dedicated to advancing pro-growth economic policies that will unleash the ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit of the American workforce.

To sum up, from early learning to life-long careers, our work touches the lives of Americans at every stage of life, and that is exactly why the ideas shared today are so important.

I am looking forward to hearing your thoughts and working together to provide students, workers, and job creators with the opportunity to reach their full potential.

With that, I yield to my friend, the ranking member from Virginia, Mr. Scott.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Walberg follows:]

STATEMENT OF HON. TIM WALBERG, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND
WORKFORCE

Thank you all for being here for this year's Member Day hearing.

Today is about listening. Member Day gives our colleagues who are not on the Committee a chance to share what is happening back home—the stories, ideas, and challenges shaping their communities. These real-world perspectives help guide our work as we shape policies that actually meet people where they are.

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resolutions, held dozens of hearings, led more than 50 oversight letters, and played a pivotal role in the reconciliation process that saved Americans trillions.

In fact, the Working Families Tax Cuts tackle the rising costs of higher education and student debt by increasing accountability for colleges and making education more affordable. The bill also strengthens our nation's workforce by increasing access to high-quality job training programs that prepare students for well-paying careers without forcing them into a baccalaureate degree. If America is going to lead in the 21st century, it needs to ensure students have practical skills aligned with high-demand jobs.

In addition, we have pushed back against the radical indoctrination happening in schools, protected women's sports, deterred foreign influence that allowed our enemies to infiltrate our universities, and combated the disturbing rise of antisemitism on our college campuses.

On the workforce side, the Committee has advanced legislation to improve the lives of American workers, reduce burdens on small businesses, address critical workforce shortages, and stimulate economic growth. The Biden-Harris administration's radical regulatory agenda coupled with its reckless spending spree, left American families and businesses rocked by record-high inflation. Workers saw their standard of living decline as inflation outpaced average wage growth. Many of the challenges from the last four years remain.

The Committee is dedicated to advancing pro-growth economic policies that will unleash the ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit of the American workforce. To sum up, from early learning to lifelong careers, our work touches the lives of Americans at every stage of life. That is exactly why the ideas shared today are so important.

I am looking forward to hearing your thoughts and working together to provide students, workers, and job creators with the opportunities to reach their full potential.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Today, the committee is gathered to hear from Members of Congress about their priorities for improving programs within our committee's jurisdiction. The committee Democrats believe that we should focus on creating a country where everyone earns a living wage in a safe workplace free from discrimination; a country where all children, regardless of background, can access the quality public education; a country where families do not fear that a trip to a doctor's office will be a trip to bankruptcy.

Simply put, committee Democrats want to build an economy that works for everyone not just the wealthy or well connected. To that end, Democrats are ready to advance legislation that achieves these very goals. For example, so far this year, we have introduced the Protecting the Right to Organize Act, which protects workers' rights to organize and bargain for higher wages, better benefits, and safer workplaces; Raise the Wage Act, which gradually raises the minimum wage to \$17 an hour; the Lowering Obstacles to Achievement Now, the LOAN Act, to lower the cost of college for current and future student borrowers and their families; the Childcare for Working Families Act, to comprehensively tackle the childcare crisis and ensure families across America can find and afford high-quality childcare; the Lowering Drug Costs for American Families Act, to lower prescriptive drug prices for families and rein in pharmaceutical price gouging; and the Equity and Inclusion Enforcement Act, to hold federally funded programs, including schools, accountable for providing students with equal access to education by restoring the private right of action for students and parents to bring disparate impact discrimination claims under title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

Democrats also are ready to reclaim our Article I responsibility and finally hold the Trump administration accountable for brazenly

flouting the law and dismantling agencies within our committee's jurisdiction without legal authority. In particular, the mass transfer of education programs is not only extremely inefficient and wasteful, it will result in inconsistent enforcement of Federal education and civil rights policy.

It is my hope that Republicans have returned from their 2-month taxpayer funded vacation both rested and ready to work.

I want to thank the Members for being with us and welcome your input and look forward to working together to ensure America is a country where everyone can succeed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Ranking Member Scott follows:]

STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Today, the Committee is gathered to hear from Members of Congress about their priorities for improving programs within our Committee's jurisdiction.

Committee Democrats believe we should focus on creating a country where everyone earns a living wage in a safe workplace free from discrimination. A country where all children, regardless of their background, can access a quality public education. A country where families do not fear that a trip to the doctor's office will bankrupt them. Simply put: Committee Democrats want to build an economy that works for everyone—not just the wealthy or well-connected.

To that end, Democrats are ready to advance legislation that achieves these very goals. For example, so far this year we have introduced:

- The Protecting the Right to Organize Act which protects workers' right to organize and bargain for higher wages, better benefits, and safer workplaces.
- The Raise the Wage Act which gradually raise the federal minimum wage to \$17.
- The Lowering Obstacles to Achievement Now (LOAN) Act to lower the cost of college for current and future student borrowers and their families.
- The Child Care for Working Families Act to comprehensively tackle the child care crisis and ensure families across America can find and afford the high-quality child care.
- The Lowering Drug Costs for American Families Act to lower prescription drug prices for families and reins in pharmaceutical price gouging.
- The Equity and Inclusion Enforcement Act to hold federally funded programs, including schools, accountable for providing students with equal access to education by restoring the private right of action for students and parents to bring disparate impact discrimination claims under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

Democrats are also ready to reclaim our Article I responsibility and finally hold the Trump Administration accountable for brazenly flouting the law and dismantling the agencies within our Committee's jurisdiction without legal authority. In particular, the mass transfer of education programs is not only extremely inefficient and wasteful, but it will also result in inconsistent enforcement of federal education and civil rights policy.

It is my hope Republicans have returned from their two-month taxpayer-funded vacation, both rested and ready to work.

I want to thank the Members for being with us. We welcome your input and look forward to working together to ensure that America is a country where everyone can succeed.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentleman.

Pursuant to committee rule 8(c), all Members who wish to insert written statements into the record may do so by submitting them to the committee clerk electronically in Microsoft Word format by 5 p.m., 14 days after this hearing. Without objection, the hearing record will remain open for 14 days to allow such statements and

other extraneous material noted during the hearing to be submitted for the official hearing record.

Members today will have 5 minutes to discuss their education and workforce priorities. I remind those Members that they will also be able to submit written testimony in support of their legislation.

First, I will recognize on-committee Members who would like to briefly testify.

The gentleman from Florida, do you wish to be recognized?

Mr. FINE. Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WALBERG. You are recognized for 5 minutes.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. RANDY FINE, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF FLORIDA**

Mr. FINE. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for having this hearing today. I really appreciate it.

I am going to start by thanking you for all of the work that you have done to fight antisemitism, which is the subject of the bill that I am going to talk about today. This committee has done an extraordinary job making that a priority, bringing in bad actors, and highlighting their failure to protect their students. I think the question now before us is, how do we pass legislation that will actually solve the problem as opposed to simply highlighting the problem?

I want to tell you my story, and I want to tell you how we solved it in Florida, and then I want to talk about the bill that I am hoping that we can eventually hear. I grew up a victim of antisemitism. I went to public school in Lexington, Kentucky. When I was in seventh grade, I failed algebra. I came home with my midterm. I could not understand it. I had gotten a great grade on all the tests. Why did I get an F?

I went to the school, and I met with the teacher, and he said, "Well, you got a zero on a test." I said, "Why did I get a zero?" I said, "Wait, that test was given on Yom Kippur. Can I make it up?" He goes, "No, that is an unexcused absence." He said, "If this was a real holiday, everyone would have it off." I got angry. It is the only time I have ever seen my dad yell at someone, but the teacher would not relent. I put my head down, I did not miss a point for the rest of the year, and I ended up getting an A in the class.

That was just the least of the antisemitism that I faced as a kid. I faced physical antisemitism. I made a promise that my children would not face the kinds of challenges that I had when they grew up. It is a promise I have failed to keep. It is one that I have worked hard on. I have kept that promise in Florida.

When I was in the Florida legislature, I introduced a bill to deal with antisemitism in K through 20, so not only K through 12, but in higher education. The bill had a very simple premise. Every time I wanted to deal with antisemitism, I kept being told freedom of speech, freedom of speech, freedom of speech, people should be able to say these things; people should be able to behave in this manner.

I said, okay, I hear you. If a student refers to a student at one of our universities by the "N" word, no one talks about freedom of speech. They invite them to go and get an education elsewhere. By

the way, that is how it ought to be. If the Ku Klux Klan wants to show up and burn a cross on the college green, no one talks about freedom of speech. They go, “You can’t do it,” and that is how it should be.

When it came to antisemitism I constantly got this “free speech, free speech, free speech” thing. I came up with a novel way to solve the problem. I said, let us define antisemitism—what is it?—and then let us not tell educational institutions how they have to deal with it. We are not going to tell them what to do. We are just going to say they have to treat antisemitism the same exact way they deal with racism, where we have 60 years of case law and institutional practice in dealing with this horrible thing: racism.

In 2019, we passed this law. It is actually the first bill in the history of the State of Florida to be signed outside of the State of Florida. The bill was signed in Israel by myself and the Governor. In the 6 years that that bill has been in place in Florida, the problem has gone away. The bill has never been challenged in court because it is lock solid. Even if it was, if the bill were to ever be overturned in court, it would mean that all of the protections that we have done for 60 years dealing with racism would also be unconstitutional.

The bill has never been challenged, been used hundreds and hundreds of times. That is why, when at Florida State University a student, seeing another student wearing an IDF T-shirt, went up and assaulted them, slapped the camera out of their face—if that happened at Columbia, they would have given an award. Well, at Florida State University, the student was suspended in 15 minutes, ultimately expelled, charged with assault, and sent to jail. In Florida, we do not put up with that.

I filed H.R. 6186, which would basically take that bill, which has solved this problem in Florida, and bring it to the other 49 States. I can tell you, as I look at the flood of Jews making what I call “little Aliyah,” when they move to Florida, because they want to be safe, they want to go to universities in Florida; they want to go to K through 12 education in Florida; there is no reason Florida should be the only place to do this.

I bring this forward because, A, I know that it works, because it has worked; and B, I know that it is constitutional because it has been in place for 6 years. As we move forward and we continue under your extraordinary leadership to solve the problem, I hope that this is something that we can take a look at bringing forward to not just highlight the bad actors but to actually go after them and solve the problems.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for having this today. Thank you for letting me speak, and I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Representative Fine follows:]

STATEMENT OF THE HON. RANDY FINE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE
STATE OF FLORIDA

Chairman Walberg, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Just half a year ago I served in the Florida House of Representatives. I never in my wildest imagination would have thought I would be an America’s newest Jewish Republican Congressman, but God has the plan for us all.

I grew up the victim of rampant systemic physical antisemitism, where it was not safe for me to eat in the cafeteria, with the other students. Where the brave school

principal saved my life by letting me hide in his office when I needed to—facing violence 12-years-old never should have to.

On the day of my Bar Mitzva, I promise I would do anything that I could to make sure my children did not face what I did. For my eight years in the Florida Legislature, I worked hard to deliver that promise to make Florida to be safest place in America to be Jewish.

In my state, people gave me the name Hebrew Hammer. It was not something I chose for myself. I wear it with pride, because it was earned over years of standing up for Jewish students and families when others stayed silent. For years, I fought against the rising hate, even as that fight brought threats not only to me, but to my wife and my children.

Florida was the first state to adapt IHRA definition of antisemitism, to name CAIR a terrorist organization, to ensure Jewish day schools have adequate security and to make sure terrorist encampments could never took hold of Florida Universities. Every one of those was my bill.

I share this because antisemitism has touched the people I represent and the people I love—and because of that, my fight against antisemitism will not end. Not now. Not ever.

Today, we are witnessing an explosion of antisemitism in America unlike anything we have seen in our lifetimes. Nowhere is it more visible, and more dangerous, than on the college campuses.

Jewish students do not feel safe. I wear the kippa now—something I did not do before. It is a new habit of mine at my son's request because of all the students who do not feel protected wearing theirs.

We need to face the hard truth. What we are witnessing is not mere political disagreement. It is calculated targeted hostility.

It is Jewish students being hunted across campuses: followed, threatened, blocked from buildings, shouted down, excluded from student life, physically attacked and assaulted. We have watched Jewish students barricade themselves inside libraries for safety. We have watched mobs gather outside dormitory doors. We have heard chants that openly call for violence against Jews.

At far too many institutions, the response has been inadequate, inconsistent, or entirely absent. That is why I am here today to ask you to consider my bill—legislation modeled directly on the law I passed in Florida, a law that is already protecting students every day.

My bill is simple and straightforward; it does two things:

First: It adopts the IHRA definition of antisemitism. The IHRA definition is the international gold standard used by the U.S. State Department, every major Jewish organization, and democratic nations. Without a definition, you cannot enforce the law. You cannot track hate. You cannot stop it. The IHRA definition makes things clear. It shows exactly what antisemitism is and stops schools from pretending they do not understand it.

The second thing my bill does is it directs institutions to treat antisemitism the same way they treat racism; that matters.

For years, universities have built vast bureaucracies to police every form of bigotry, except the one Jews actually face. If a student were targeted for their race or gender, we know exactly how a university would react.

When the victim is Jewish, we suddenly get committees, task forces, statements, and more often—absolutely nothing. My bill ends that double standard. If you target a student because they are Jewish, it will be treated the same way as if you targeted them because they are Black or Hispanic or Asian.

In Florida, we passed this law with overwhelming bipartisan support, and we have seen immediate impact:

- Universities updated their codes of conduct.
- Administrators know exactly what qualifies as antisemitism.
- Jewish students have a mechanism to report hate that will actually be acted on.
- Incidents that were previously ignored are now taken seriously, investigated, and addressed.

Higher education institutions have a responsibility to protect every student. Right now, too many are failing Jewish students. That needs to be stopped. No student in America should have to choose between getting an education and being safe because of who they are. Not one.

If the universities do not fix this themselves—then we in Congress have a responsibility to act. I passed this law in Florida because Jewish students were being targeted and no one was doing enough. Today, Jewish students across the country are facing the same threat.

I have a bill that works. Florida proves it. We see clarity, accountability, and safety. It is time to extend it nationwide.

I am preparing to introduce this legislation, and once it is filed, I am ready to work with you and every Member to bring it across the finish line.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentleman for sharing those ideas and case history with us as well.

Are there any other Members who wish to be recognized?

I recognize Representative Hayes for her 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. JAHANA HAYES, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Mrs. HAYES. Thank you. Good morning. I appreciate the opportunity to come before the committee today to talk about what I find as my priorities for myself and the constituents that I represent.

It is very simple: This committee needs to reassert our Article I and jurisdictional authorities over the areas that we cover, in particular, the dismantling of the Department of Education. The committee has had no hearings to conduct oversight on the efforts led by the Trump administration to dismantle the Department of Education. The Department was created by Congress and only can be abolished by an act of Congress. No matter what your opinion is on this matter, this committee should be having hearings to discuss what is happening.

On March 20, President Trump signed an executive order to close the Department of Education, and most recently, on November 18, several agreements were signed to disperse the authorities. This administration has used interagency agreements to evade Congress and transfer day-to-day operations of congressionally mandated programs to other Federal agencies. The most significant actions taken so far were this week.

On Tuesday, the administration announced it signed six new agreements with the Departments of Labor, Interior, Health and Human Services, and States to manage various education functions and, quote, “break up the Federal education bureaucracy.” We should have the heads of all of those Departments before this committee to explain what that looks like and the impact it will have on students, to make sure that this transition does not negatively impact students, rural communities, low-income students, students with disabilities, and the populations that rely most heavily on public education. What do these changes mean to them?

The Office of Civil Rights had mass layoffs this year. The Department’s own data shows that there has been a decline in resolving civil rights cases, while new complaints have increased. This committee should be holding hearings on that. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act specifically says that the Department of Education is the home of 21st Century Community Learning Centers. This committee should be having hearings on that.

ICE agents are showing up at schools scaring immigrant children. This committee should be having hearings on that. Parents, teachers, administrators, community leaders are uncertain about what this means, and this committee needs to reassert our jurisdictional and congressional authority so that we can get answers. The public demands answers.

While Secretary McMahon is creating a public campaign to show how no impact happened during the government shutdown—I mentioned this in committee the other day—our military schools, which are where 67,000 students are educated, canceled extracurricular activities; teachers were not paid; students risked losing scholarships. There was disruption. This committee should be having hearings on that.

The second thing I would like to address before my time is over is that I still have not received a response to my September 12th letter to this committee requesting a hearing specifically on school shootings. As the chair said, everybody should deal with the priorities of their district. Well, I represent Newtown-Sandy Hook, and on December 14, 2012, I was in the classroom. It is unconscionable that this committee cannot even have a hearing on that when we have seen a rise in school shootings over this year. This includes multifaceted interventions that include mental health support, community engagement, gun safety measures, and educational programs. We should be discussing ways to address this crisis.

This week, in my State, the Sandy Hook Promise, the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protections, and the Connecticut School Districts recently celebrated the culmination of 7 years of collaboration to improve school safety through grants. We are doing the work in Connecticut to make sure that this does not happen in our State again. This committee should be having hearings to make sure that this does not happen anywhere in this country.

The grants that we have provided supported a wide range of district and youth-led initiatives in Connecticut schools to deliver a holistic set of violence prevention programs, including peer-led interventions to educational programs and self-harm reductions. These lifesaving programs have helped prevent at least 20 potential youth suicides and support over 50 mental health interventions.

We could also talk about ways to improve the physical infrastructure of schools to attempt to prevent school shootings. Either way, this committee should be holding hearings on that.

We have heard the rundown of all the hearings that we have had over this year and, in some cases, multiple hearings on the same topics; yet we have had zero hearings on school safety and prevention when it comes to school shootings or the dismantling of the Department of Education. I encourage the chair, as we are moving forward through the rest of the year and the calendar is being built out, that these topics be discussed.

With that, I yield back.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentlelady from Connecticut, and your comments are duly noted.

I recognize now the gentleman from Oregon, Ms. Bonamici, for your 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. SUZANNE BONAMICI, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OREGON

Ms. BONAMICI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to start by aligning myself with every comment made by Representative Hayes, our national teacher of the year, who serves on the committee. We all have a lot to learn from her.

I recognize it is unusual for a committee member to use a Member Day to elevate their priorities. Unfortunately, these are not normal times, Mr. Chairman.

On Tuesday, the Department of Education announced six new interagency agreements that they are using to try to move critical educational programs and services to the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Labor, and the State Department. This follows the interagency agreement earlier this year to move the administration of career and technical education and adult education out of the Department of Education.

This plan is from Project 2025's radical and destructive agenda to dismantle and eliminate the Department of Education, which is illegal and unconstitutional. It is an act of Congress that created the Department of Education, and only an act of Congress could dismantle it.

Far from their stated goal of empowering parents and States, these interagency agreements create additional hurdles for educators, for staff, for families. Instead of reporting to and receiving funds from only one Federal agency, now States and schools must navigate working with as many as five different agencies.

I truly do not understand why my Republican colleagues are arguing that it is somehow better for students and schools to scatter the programs and funding streams that support them across multiple agencies, all of which have different systems and procedures and typically do not have staff with the relevant expertise.

I am always looking for smarter, better ways to do things, but this plan is neither smart nor better. It does not streamline Federal bureaucracy. It complicates it. I want to emphasize that it is clear that the administration cannot legally close the Department without congressional action, and moving everything out of other agencies is the equivalent of closing the Department. The executive branch does not have that power, and we certainly should not give up ours under Article I of the Constitution.

Mr. Chairman, this should have been done prior to these interagency agreements, but I urge the committee to immediately hold hearings about these actions so we can understand the effects these interagency agreements will have on students, families, educators, and staff. We must bring Secretary McMahon before the committee to answer our questions about this unlawful restructuring of a congressionally authorized agency. Anything else would be a dereliction of our duty as lawmakers.

There is a lot at stake here. What message does it send around the country and the world that the United States is dismantling its Department of Education? Not a good one. We must address the illegal and unconstitutional effort to close the Department. The sooner the better, before more damage is done.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentlelady, and she yields.

Are there any others that seek to be recognized on the committee?

Well, thank you to each of you who are here. I would make note as well that senior staff of the committee on both sides of the aisle are here and are taking copious notes. I can see that happening. This certainly is a legitimate hearing to hear your ideas and concerns, and decisions will be made as we move forward.

Committee Members are certainly welcome to remain on the dais, but I remind committee Members that it is customary, in this committee, not to ask witnesses questions during Member Day hearings but to take in all that we can from your comments.

Now, we will give the turn to the panel. I will first recognize Representative Dexter for your testimony. Thank you for being here.

STATEMENT OF THE HON. MAXINE DEXTER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OREGON

Ms. DEXTER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Vice—or, I am sorry, Ranking Member Scott—it is—old State habits break hard—and Members of the Education and Workforce Committee.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in Member Day hearing and discuss priorities where I believe there is a real opportunity for bipartisan partnership to better serve working families.

I am Maxine Dexter. I am a mother, a physician, and a very proud representative for Oregon's Third congressional District. I am also humbled to be an American Dream realized. I grew up in a working-class family where we only knew that you had to work hard and play by the rules, and we found opportunity. I am only able to sit here before you today because of the investments our government made to make my life possible.

I am the first and only person—even today, nieces, nephews—to graduate from college. The idea that I could 1 day become a doctor was a dream that grit, hard work, and government made possible. Our country invested in me and people like me. I had access to well-funded public schools, safe neighborhoods, reliable transit, a union job, and affordable rent. It is painful to say, but opportunity is much less plentiful today.

As a mother and a Representative, I see that, for my kids' generation, the American Dream, it is just out of reach. I came to Congress to fix that. Where do we start? For one, we truly center working families. We cannot do what is needed to help them just getting by. We need them to have the opportunity to thrive. They deserve economic stability, a foundation to succeed from, and people living paycheck to paycheck cannot make that work. We have to do better.

I look at you, this committee, with a hope that you will partner in making the American Dream once again possible. Here are a few of my legislative ideas that I hope you will consider and even decide to champion with me.

First, I am developing legislation modeled after an incredible multigenerational housing community in my district called Bridge Meadows. Bridge Meadows offers affordable homes to seniors, foster youth, and their families. It is not just housing. Bridge Meadows builds a community with wraparound social services, tutoring, and it enriches the lives of those children who have been left be-

hind, and those impacted by both foster care and elders who embrace them and cultivate a future with them.

The Intergenerational Community Housing Act would create a pilot to scale this model nationally and gather evidence on the importance of having stable, affordable—and community.

Second, the Healthy and Housed Older Adults Act, which confronts senior homelessness, head on. Senior homelessness is rising at an alarming rate, often driven by fixed incomes, unaffordable rents, and unaddressed health needs. My proposal would create a grant program dedicated to bolstering coordination between local homelessness Continuums of Care and Area Agencies on Aging. This would support coordinated housing, medical care, case management, and aging services for our elders.

Another bill, the College Success Through Stable Housing Act, is a pilot program to provide stable, affordable housing and supportive services for college students experiencing homelessness. Affordable rent was foundational to my success in college and medical school. Every student deserves the same. My goal is to ensure every family has the ability to live a healthy and safe life in the community of their choice.

As the only pulmonologist ever serving in Congress, I have cared for patients struggling to breathe throughout my career. I have seen firsthand how smoke, dust, and pollution ravage our lungs and steal years from people's lives. No child should sit in a classroom filled with hazardous air, and no worker should have to choose between a paycheck and their health. That is why I introduced this Shielding Students from Wildfire Smoke Act, meant to strengthen national understanding on how to protect children and teachers' health during wildfire smoke events.

I also introduced the Farmworker Smoke and Excessive Heat Protection Act to ensure basic safeguards for the farm workers in our community. I am grateful that many on this committee are engaged in these efforts.

Finally, I want to associate myself with the written testimony submitted by Congressman Morgan McGarvey about the importance of protecting our communities against black lung and silicosis. These are horrible, preventable diseases that lead to higher rates of tuberculosis, cancer, disability, and death. I would add that we must also consider occupational presumptions for conditions like black lung and silicosis with a commitment to robust research and development of preventative tools so that high-risk occupations become safer.

I encourage the committee to consider just a few, even more, of these issues. Thank you all for being here today and for your commitment to supporting our working families. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Representative Dexter follows:]

STATEMENT OF THE HON. MAXINE DEXTER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM
THE STATE OF OREGON

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Education and Workforce Committee.

I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this Member Day hearing and discuss priorities where I believe there is a real opportunity for bipartisan partnership to better serve working families.

I am Maxine Dexter. I am mother, a physician, and the proud U.S. Representative for Oregon's Third Congressional District.

I am also a product of the American Dream. I grew up in a working-class family, and I was the first in my family to graduate from college.

I left home at seventeen and achieved what once felt impossible for a kid like me: I became a physician.

That was only possible because this country invested in me. I had access to well-funded public schools, safe neighborhoods, strong transit, a union job, and affordable rent.

It is because of the resources and opportunities this country afforded me that I was able to create a better life for myself than my parents had.

It is painful to say, but the same is not true for our kids today.

As a mother, I see that for my kids' generation, the American Dream is increasingly out of reach.

I came to Congress to fix that.

Where do we start? For one, it means centering working families. That means advancing policies that give working families the support they need to do more than just get by—but to thrive.

The foundation of a thriving middle class, when you boil it down, is making sure everyone in this country has a stable, supportive place to call home.

I hope this committee will partner with me in making that promise real.

I am developing legislation modeled after an incredible multigenerational housing community in my district called Bridge Meadows.

Bridge Meadows offers affordable homes to seniors, foster youth, and their families.

It is not just housing; Bridge Meadows builds a community with wrap-around social services that enriches the well-being of children and youth impacted by foster care and elders.

My Intergenerational Community Housing Act would create a pilot to scale this model nationally and gather evidence on the importance of stable, affordable, housing community.

Likewise, I am developing legislation, the Healthy and Housed Older Adults Act, which confronts senior homelessness head on. Senior homelessness is rising at an alarming rate, often driven by fixed incomes, unaffordable rents, and unaddressed health needs.

My proposal would create a grant program dedicated to bolstering coordination between local homelessness Continuums of Care and Area Agencies on Aging. This would support coordinated housing, medical care, case management, and aging services for our seniors.

I am also developing the College Success through Stable Housing Act, a pilot program to provide stable, affordable housing and supportive services for college students experiencing homelessness.

Affordable rent made gave me the opportunity to succeed in college and medical school. I want every student to have the same chance.

These are just a number of my priorities. The bottom line is that giving working families the stability they need to thrive must be our mission.

It must be the mission of not just this committee, not just of this Congress, but of the federal government in perpetuity.

Our country has never been perfect. Our history has always been a zigzag, a constant push and pull between our highest ideals and our deepest flaws.

We have confronted slavery, segregation, exploitation, discrimination, and every time we face those truths rather than bury them, we grow stronger.

Now, we must confront the reality that the federal government has fallen short in its commitment to the working class.

It is not too late to choose a different path. We can choose to build a country where every child believes the American Dream belongs to them too.

In addition to housing, I am committed to making sure the places we live, work, learn, and play have clean, safe air.

As a pulmonologist, I cared for patients struggling to breathe and I have seen firsthand how smoke and pollution ravage our lungs and steal years of healthy life.

No child should sit in a classroom filled with hazardous air, and no worker should have to choose between a paycheck and their lungs.

That is why I introduced the Shielding Students from Wildfire Smoke Act meant to strengthen national understanding on how to protect children's health during wildfire smoke events.

It is why I introduced the Farmworker Smoke and Excessive Heat Protection Act to ensure basic safeguards for the workers who keep our agricultural economy running, many of whom endure the highest exposures with the fewest protections.

I am grateful that many on this committee are engaged in this effort.

I want to thank my friend Congressman McGarvey for his leadership on advancing legislation to improve treatment outcomes and preventive measures for black lung disease. I encourage the committee to take up this critical issue.

Thank you, all, for being here today and for your commitment to supporting working families.

I look forward to working with you.

Chairman WALBERG. Thank you. Thank you. I appreciated your time and making these comments.

Now we recognize the gentleman from Oklahoma, Representative Hern. Welcome.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. KEVIN HERN, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA**

Mr. HERN. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Ranking Member, and distinguished Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am here to highlight an issue of significant importance to small business owners, workers, and local economies across the United States: the need for a clear, permanent joint employer standard for franchise businesses.

Franchising is a major facilitator of economic growth in the United States. In 2024 alone, franchises generated approximately \$896 billion in economic output and employed about 8.8 million workers. More than 831,000 independently owned small businesses operate under the franchise agreements across the country.

The franchise business model has long served as a powerful engine of economic opportunity for Americans from all backgrounds. According to Oxford Economics, Black-owned franchises earned 2.2 times more than Black-owned independent businesses; Hispanic-owned franchises earn 1.6 times more than Hispanic-owned independent businesses; and Asian-owned franchises earn 1.4 times more than Asian-owned independent businesses.

My nearly 30 years as a McDonald's franchisee, including 8 years as chair of the Franchise Relations on the National Leadership Team, showed me that franchising is one of the clearest expressions of the American Dream. I have seen firsthand how essential clear labor standards and transparency are to ensure this business model continues to thrive.

The franchise model is built on a simple but powerful idea: allowing entrepreneurs to go into business for themselves but not by themselves. Local franchise owners invest in their own capital, hire their own employees, manage the payroll, oversee every aspect of daily operation. Meanwhile, franchisors provide branding, operational expertise, and support necessary for consistency and customer trust. This partnership has created generations of successful business owners.

This business model and the opportunities it creates is increasingly threatened by regulatory uncertainty around the Federal joint employer standard. The joint employer standard determines when two entities share legal responsibility for labor law violations based on the degree of control one exercises over another's employees. For decades, this standard was straightforward: two employers were jointly liable if one exercised substantial direct and immediate control over essential terms of employment.

This changed dramatically in 2015 when the National Labor Relations Board broadened the definition. The new standard swept franchisors and franchisees into unnecessary joint liability, despite franchisees independently hiring and managing their own workers. The consequences were real and significant. The 2015 standard cost franchise businesses over \$33 billion annually, eliminated 376,000 job opportunities, and drastically increased lawsuits against local businesses.

Since 2015, the definition shifted four separate times creating severe legal and operational uncertainty for small business owners. In 2024, a Federal court struck down the NLRB's most expansive joint employer rule, but litigation continues. The instability erodes trust in regulators, discourages investment, stifles growth across the franchise sector.

To provide clarity and stability for millions of workers and business owners, Congress should adopt the bipartisan, bicameral American Franchise Act. With more than 40 cosponsors and strong support from Members on both sides of the aisle, including on this very committee, the bill reflects a broad, balanced commitment to strengthening the franchise sector.

The legislation makes targeted modest amendments to the Fair Labor Standards Act and the National Labor Relations Act to codify a clear standard. A franchisor may be considered a joint employer of a franchisee's employees only if the franchisor possesses and exercises substantial, direct, and immediate control over one or more essential terms of a condition of employment.

This standard is consistent with decades of precedent and current NLRB policy. The bill does not grant immunity to franchisors. Instead, it ensures that actions like setting brand standards, protecting trademarks and intellectual property, or providing training materials cannot be misconstrued as direct control over a franchisee's workforce. The legislation applies only to franchisors and to franchisees under the NLRA and FLSA, not to independent contractors or other liability doctrines, such as misclassifications or agency.

In short, the AFA restores balance, preserves the independence of local business owners, empowers Americans from all backgrounds, protects a business model that contributes \$1 trillion to the United States economy. Franchising offers a unique entrepreneurial opportunity to minorities and veterans and all aspiring entrepreneurs with nearly 26 percent minority ownership rate and 14 percent veteran ownership rate. No other sector has done more to broaden economy stability and lift Americans out of poverty, including myself.

Franchise owners are folks who take risks, invest their savings, and create jobs in their communities. They serve a stable regulatory framework that allows them to grow with confidence. Passing the AFA will provide the clarity and fairness they need to thrive.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I yield back.
[The prepared statement of Representative Hern follows:]

STATEMENT OF THE HON. KEVIN HERN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE
STATE OF OKLAHOMA

Chairman Walberg, Ranking Member Scott, and distinguished members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am here to highlight an issue of significant importance to small business owners, workers, and local economies across the United States: the need for a clear, permanent joint employer standard for franchise businesses.

Franchising is a major facilitator of economic growth in the US. In 2024 alone, franchises generated approximately \$896 billion in economic output and employed about 8.8 million workers. More than 831,000 independently owned small businesses operate under franchise agreements across the country.

The franchise business model has long served as a powerful engine of economic opportunity for Americans from all backgrounds. According to Oxford Economics, “Black-owned franchises earn 2.2 times more than Black-owned independent businesses; Hispanic-owned franchises earn 1.6 times more than Hispanic-owned independent businesses; and Asian-owned franchises earn 1.4 times more than Asian-owned independent businesses.”

My nearly 30 years as a McDonald’s franchisee—including eight years as Chair of Franchise Relations on the National Leadership Team—showed me that franchising is one of the clearest expressions of the American Dream. I have seen first-hand how essential clear labor standards and transparency are to ensure this business model continues to thrive.

The franchise model is built on a simple but powerful idea: allowing entrepreneurs to go into business for themselves, but not by themselves. Local franchise owners invest their own capital, hire their own employees, manage payroll and oversee every aspect of daily operations. Meanwhile, franchisors provide branding, operational expertise, and support necessary for consistency and consumer trust. This partnership has created generations of successful small business owners.

This business model—and the opportunities it creates—is increasingly threatened by regulatory uncertainty around the federal joint employer standard. The joint employer standard determines when two entities share legal responsibility for labor law violations based on the degree of control one exercises over another’s employees. For decades, this standard was straightforward: two employers were jointly liable only if one exercised substantial, direct, and immediate control over essential terms of employment.

This changed dramatically in 2015, when the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) broadened the definition. The new standard swept franchisors and franchisees into unnecessary joint liability, despite franchisees independently hiring and managing their workers.

The consequences were real and significant. The 2015 standard cost franchise businesses over \$33 billion annually, eliminated 376,000 job opportunities, and drastically increased lawsuits against local businesses.

Since 2015, the definition has shifted four separate times, creating severe legal and operational uncertainty for thousands of small business owners. In 2024, a federal court struck down the NLRB’s most recent expansive joint employer rule—but litigation continues. This instability erodes trust in regulators, discourages investment, and stifles growth across the franchise sector.

To provide clarity and stability for millions of workers and business owners, Congress should adopt the bipartisan, bicameral American Franchise Act. With more than 40 cosponsors and strong support from members on both sides of the aisle—including on this very committee—the bill reflects a broad, balanced commitment to strengthening the franchise sector.

This legislation makes targeted, modest amendments to the Fair Labor Standards Act and the National Labor Relations Act to codify a clear standard:

A franchisor may be considered a joint employer of a franchisee’s employees only if the franchisor possesses and exercises substantial, direct, and immediate control over one or more essential terms or conditions of employment. This standard is consistent with decades of precedent and current NLRB policy.

The bill does not grant immunity to franchisors. Instead, it ensures:

Actions like setting brand standards, protecting trademarks and intellectual property, or providing training materials cannot be misconstrued as direct control over a franchisee’s workforce.

The legislation applies only to franchisors and franchisees under the NLRA and FLSA—not to independent contractors or other liability doctrines such as misclassification or agency.

In short, the American Franchise Act restores balance, preserves the independence of local business owners, empowers Americans from all backgrounds, and protects a business model that contributes nearly a trillion dollars to the U.S. economy. Franchising offers a unique entrepreneurial opportunity to minorities, veterans, and all aspiring entrepreneurs, with nearly a 26-percent minority ownership rate and 14-percent veteran ownership rate; Also, no other sector has done more to foster broad-based economic stability and lift Americans out of poverty, including myself.

Franchise owners are folks who take risks, invest their savings, and create jobs in their communities. They deserve a stable regulatory framework that allows them to grow with confidence. Passing the American Franchise Act will provide the clarity and fairness they need to thrive.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I yield back.

Chairman WALBERG. Thank you for taking the opportunity. We appreciate it.

Mr. HERN. You bet.

Chairman WALBERG. Now I recognize the gentleman from Kansas, Representative Mann. Welcome.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. TRACEY MANN, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF KANSAS**

Mr. MANN. Thank you, Chairman Walberg, Ranking Member Scott, and Members of this committee, for the opportunity to speak with you today.

Today I would like to discuss Haskell Indian Nation's University, located in my district, in Lawrence, Kansas. Established in 1884 by Federal legislation aimed to fulfill the United States treaty and trust obligations to provide a high-quality education to American Indians, Haskell is the only Tribal university in the world with an entirely indigenous population. It is a one-of-a-kind historic and invaluable institution.

However—and let me be clear—when it comes to Haskell, the U.S. Department of Interior and the Bureau of Indian Education have dropped the ball. Years of mismanagement, lack of oversight, cycles of misconduct have all compounded, and Congress needs to conduct serious oversight.

The students and faculty at Haskell deserve a safe learning and working environment. I have been encouraged by the House Education and Workforce Committee and Natural Resources Committee's oversight efforts over the past few years, and I hope we will see that continued.

I, along with Senator Jerry Moran, introduced the Haskell Indian Nation's University Improvement Act, which would federally charter Haskell and separate them from the governance of the BIE. The Federal Government has sadly done a disservice to this school, and one way to make this right is to put the education of Haskell students back in the hands of Indian Country.

While the Federal Government will still be obligated to provide necessary funds to the school, governance would be transferred to qualified Tribal leaders from across the country. The legislation would open the door for opportunities that Haskell is currently not eligible for, the ability to expand educational programs and provide Native students with a safe learning environment.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support this legislation and to reach out to my office should you have any questions.

I would also like to take time to discuss another piece of legislation I, along with Representative Joe Neguse, introduced, called the States Handling Access to Reciprocity for Employment Act, or the SHARE Act. Hospitals and other healthcare facilities are experiencing workforce shortages that are causing considerable strain on our healthcare system. One way to address this shortage is to expedite licensure processes for our current providers.

Current law requires healthcare providers to obtain a license or certification from each State in which they wish to practice. If a provider licensed in one State relocates to another, that provider must then complete the licensure process again for each new State in which they wish to practice. This process is burdensome and strips providers of the ability to practice in any new State until the application is approved, sometimes taking more than half a year.

The SHARE Act would make a technical correction to modernize a vital component of a licensure process for healthcare providers by authorizing the FBI to share criminal history record information between States for licensure purposes, allowing cooperation between States while protecting each State's authority to determine whether a provider is eligible to practice in the State.

This legislation extends the reach of healthcare professionals, improves access to medical specialists, and leverages the use of medical technologies like telehealth.

As the committee continues to work on legislation and oversight surrounding Haskell Indian Nation's University and our healthcare workforce, I ask that you consider my comments today are taken into consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you on these timely and important issues, and I yield back the remainder of my time. [The prepared statement of Representative Mann follows:]

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Established in 1884 by federal legislation aimed to fulfil the United States' treaty and trust obligations to provide a high-quality education to American Indians, Haskell is the only Tribal university in the world with an entirely indigenous population. It is a one-of-a-kind, historic and invaluable institution. However, and let me be clear—when it comes to Haskell, the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Education have dropped the ball. Years of mismanagement, lack of oversight, and cycles of misconduct have all compounded, and Congress needs to conduct serious oversight.

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As the Committee continues to work on legislation and oversight surrounding Haskell Indian Nations University or our healthcare workforce, I ask that you ensure my comments today are taken into consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on these timely and important issues, and I yield back the remainder of my time.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentleman, and your message is well heard.

Now I recognize the——

Mr. TAYLOR. Ohio. It is okay, I am new here.

Chairman Walberg [continuing]. The gentleman from Ohio—go Blue—for his 5 minutes of testimony. Representative Taylor, you are welcome.

**STATEMENT OF THE HON. DAVID J. TAYLOR, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OHIO**

Mr. TAYLOR. Thank you, Chairman. Thank you, Ranking Member, for having me here today. Thank you for the Members that joined us today as well, and thank you for all the hard work you do.

I hail from Ohio's Second congressional District, which stretches across the entirety of southern Ohio, from the Cincinnati suburbs to Ohio's border with West Virginia. My district is in the core of Appalachia and is ground zero for many of the issues facing rural America, from the lack of broadband to the shortage of childcare, as well as jobs and skilled workers.

While there are many issues my constituents are concerned about facing, above all, they are concerned about their children's future and the opportunities that they will have to move up in the world. These are valid concerns, especially as the communities I represent have largely been left behind and neglected by the Federal Government.

Over the last 40 years, many towns in southern Ohio saw power plants and factories close, jobs shipped overseas, and economic growth shift to the urban centers and the coast. Fortunately, thanks to the hard work of countless community leaders, southern Ohio is starting to make a great comeback, and there are similar encouraging stories across America.

However, there is more work to be done, and much of the important work Congress will do will take place right here in the Education and Workforce Committee. The policies crafted by the committee have the potential to accelerate economic growth, improve educational outcomes, and help prepare our young people for good-paying jobs right out of school.

As a third-generation small business owner, I understand the value of having a skilled workforce. To that end, I am proud that we passed the critical workforce Pell provision in the Working Families Tax Cut, which allows Pell grants to be used to gain workforce credentials through short-term career training programs. These kinds of creative solutions are key to addressing the skilled labor shortage, which, if not addressed, will leave us with a shortage of electricians, carpenters, plumbers, HVAC technicians, and many other essential workers.

Luckily, community organizations across America are stepping up to fill this gap and help train a skilled workforce. In my district, United Steel Workers Local 689 has partnered with the Department of Energy to train individuals on plant safety and inspection. The University of Rio Grande has partnered with Ohio Means Jobs to offer programming for in-demand jobs outside the traditional 4-year pathway. Growing Rural Independence Together Project partners with countless organizations across southern Ohio to provide career services.

I know I speak for everyone across Ohio's Second congressional District when I say that we are grateful for the work they do in helping people develop a skill and finding meaning in their work. While organizations in my district are grateful for the Federal funds they receive, I have heard from some of them that the requirements attached to these Federal funds are too restrictive, resulting in fewer individuals being served.

That is exactly why I am introducing the Workforce Flexibility Act in the coming weeks. This bill, supported by numerous workforce organizations and stakeholders, would help provide flexibility to our local organizations as they seek to train the next generation. In one WIOA district that covers three counties in southern Ohio, they had to turn away more than 300 people from their training program due to the lack of flexibility under Title I of WIOA.

This is extremely disheartening as every business I visit needs workers, and fewer people are getting involved in skilled trades. There are many organizations that would benefit from more flexibility. In the end, the real beneficiaries will be the young people this flexibility will put on track to achieving the American Dream, a job they can be proud of and which allows them to own a home and raise a family.

As the committee continues to evaluate legislation in this Congress and work on the WIOA reauthorization, I look forward to working with you to embrace more local flexibility so we can fast-track workforce development and revitalize towns and cities across America. The changes in my bill could get more people trained, grow our workforce in rural America, and resurrect our small towns as we bring manufacturing back to the United States.

I want to thank the committee again for the opportunity to speak here today, and I appreciate the work you do on these pressing

issues. I respectfully urge you to include my Workforce Flexibility Act in the WIOA reauthorization, and I look forward to continuing to work with you to usher in America's golden age.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Representative Taylor follows:]

STATEMENT OF THE HON. DAVID J. TAYLOR, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM
THE STATE OF OHIO

Thank you, Chairman Walberg, and Ranking Member Scott, for giving me the opportunity to speak here today and thank you for all the hard work you do.

I hail from Ohio's Second Congressional District, which stretches across the entirety of southern Ohio, from the Cincinnati suburbs to Ohio's border with West Virginia.

My district is in the core of Appalachia and is ground zero for many of the issues facing rural America—from the lack of broadband to the shortage of childcare as well as jobs and skilled workers.

While there are many issues my constituents are concerned about facing, above all, they are concerned about their children's future and the opportunities they will have to move up in the world. These are valid concerns, especially as the communities I represent have largely been left behind and neglected by the federal government.

Over the last forty years, many towns in southern Ohio saw power plants and factories close, jobs shipped overseas, and economic growth shift to the urban centers and the coasts.

Fortunately, thanks to the hard work of countless community leaders, southern Ohio is starting to make a great comeback, and there are similar encouraging stories across America. However, there is more work to be done, and much of the important work Congress will do will take place right here in the Education and Workforce Committee.

The policies crafted by this committee have the potential to accelerate economic development, improve educational outcomes, and help prepare our young people for good-paying jobs right out of school. As a third-generation small business owner, I understand the value of having a skilled workforce.

To that end, I am proud that we passed a critical Workforce Pell provision in the Working Families Tax Cut, which allows Pell Grants to be used to gain workforce credentials through short-term career training programs.

These kinds of creative solutions are key to addressing the skilled labor shortage, which if not addressed, will leave us with a shortage of:

- Electricians
- Carpenters
- Plumbers
- HVAC technicians and many other essential workers.

Luckily, community organizations across America are stepping up to fill this gap and help train a skilled workforce.

In my district, United Steel Workers Local 689 has partnered with the Department of Energy to train individuals on plant safety and inspection.

The University of Rio Grande has partnered with Ohio Means Jobs to offer programming for in-demand jobs outside of the traditional 4-year pathway. The Growing Rural Independence Together Project partners with countless organizations across southern Ohio to provide career services. I know I speak for everyone across Ohio's Second Congressional District when I say that we are grateful for the work they do in helping people develop a skill and find meaning in their work.

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There are many organizations that would benefit from more flexibility. In the end, the real beneficiaries will be the young people this flexibility will put on track to

achieve the American Dream. A job they can be proud of, and which allows them to own a home and raise a family.

As the Committee continues to evaluate legislation this Congress and work on the WIOA reauthorization, I look forward to working with you to embrace more local flexibility so we can fast-track workforce development and revitalize towns and cities across America. The changes in my bill could get more people trained, grow our workforce in rural America, and resurrect our small towns as we bring manufacturing back to the United States.

I want to thank the committee again for the opportunity to speak here today, and I appreciate the work you do on these pressing issues.

I respectfully urge you to include my Workforce Flexibility Act in the WIOA reauthorization, and I look forward to continuing to work with you to usher in America's Golden Age.

Thank you and I yield back.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the Representative.

I appreciate you all being here.

Under Committee Rule 9, we would now question witnesses under the 5-minute rule. Does anyone wish to ask questions?

Well, I will take my opportunity.

Representative HERN, I recognize your concern very clearly to make sure that the continuing whipsaw, specifically on joint employer, does not continue. With your legislation, there are two pieces of legislation within our jurisdiction that address that key issue. One is much broader across the spectrum of businesses. Yours is much narrower just for franchise. Could you care to comment on the reason why your more limited approach would be necessary even with the much broader piece of legislation that would take your concerns in as well?

Mr. HERN. Sure. I think, when you have a broader audience that you are trying to find all the nuances with the larger bill. Speaking strictly for franchising, something I have spent my entire life in, seeing people that came from all walks of life, needing the opportunity but not knowing if they are willing to take that risk or not with the uncertainty that happens—that, 1 day, you might invest a lot of money, and, the very next day, based on the change of administration when there is no law in place to that clearly defines the joint employer alignment, you can invest all your money, and the next day become an employee of that brand.

That was never meant for the entire time that franchising has been around since, you know, for 70 years. It was to provide the opportunity where a brand came in, whatever the brand may be—it did not have to be a restaurant—but it came in and provided the technical expertise to get you started off so you did not have the startup costs to deal with. Those are amortized through the franchise agreement and the opportunity to go in there.

You also have the ability to go out there and look at these brands across the Nation. With the prevalence of social media and other things out there, the internet, it is very easy to monitor the behavior of franchisors, the bad ones and the good ones, and be able to pick and choose. That is inside of that agreement.

The external pressures on the franchising and the joint employer issue that started in 2015 with the BFI issue out in California, a much broader issue, not necessarily franchising but more of a leasing arrangement, we are trying to define this specifically for an industry? Quite frankly, Mr. Chairman, just take that off your plate.

Make it easy. Get that piece out of there so that we were looking at a broader situation so that these men and women, these African Americans, Asians, Hispanics across America that have invested their entire life, and many multigenerational franchises can have assurances that the moneys and the time and energy that they have invested, not only in their businesses but in their people and in their families, can have certainty that those will be in existence come 3 years from now or 3 months from now.

Chairman WALBERG. Thank you.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. Chairman.

Chairman WALBERG. I recognize the ranking member.

Mr. SCOTT. Yes. Mr. Chairman, following up on that, I thought I heard you say that you would be considered a joint employer if you had one or more—if you satisfied one or more of the measures of control. Some bills have it set up where you have to have—you are not an employer unless you have each and every measure of control. Have you compared your bills to the other bills that are pending?

Mr. HERN. I have not. I mean, I am sure my staff has, but we tried to be very specific on this one so that we clearly defined. I can tell you, again, having worked at the highest level of leadership for the franchisees—and unlike Congress, we did not get paid to do it; we did it for paying it forward—it was a grave concern for both entities, franchisor and franchisee, that there was a complete delineation between those responsibilities.

McDonald's, quite frankly, I will just choose them as the person—the group that I worked with for many years, obviously, a brand well known, if they were going to be involved as a joint employer, there is no question that their—just as it would for anybody on the dais here, that, if you are responsible for the hiring, you are going to be in that restaurant every day as a corporation. It all of a sudden becomes a corporation.

If you are a franchisee of that brand, whatever the brand is, you wanted that pushback, that separation. You wanted the independence of being a businessperson. You worked your life working for somebody, and so you wanted that delineation. We are not trying to protect the franchisor from, you know, being somebody that is egregious, tell you who you have to hire, how much you have to pay. That is the independence of the individual franchisee.

Mr. SCOTT. Now, there have been a lot of challenges to McDonald's. Has McDonald's corporate ever been ruled to be a joint employer?

Mr. HERN. I do not know the legal action that is taken against any franchisor out there.

Mr. SCOTT. Okay. I think if you are using one or more of the criteria, you may be consistent with the present—with some of the roles that we might even come to agreement on.

Let me ask, Dr. Dexter, Representative Dexter, I guess, in this context, you talked about the support you have got to become a physician. Are you familiar with what happened in that legislation, that “big ugly bill”? How would that affect a person's ability to become a physician?

Ms. DEXTER. Yes, sir. Thank you so much, Ranking Member Scott, for asking that. In fact, I was just meeting with members of

the American Medical Association from Oregon this week. It is going to have devastating impacts on our physician population.

You know, kids like me, I was economically disadvantaged but not racially disadvantaged, clearly. Getting into medical school would not have been possible for me in any way without the educational opportunities that these loans had.

The undermining of DEI efforts as well as economic support right now is going to put us in a place where White privileged people are the only ones that can take care of us, because—well, that is not entirely true. I am sorry for that. There is obviously privileged people of color, but it—

Mr. SCOTT. Do you mean people that can write a \$50,000 check?

Ms. DEXTER. Yes. It is not even \$50,000. Most are graduating with \$200,000 to \$300,000.

Mr. SCOTT. Well, yes, but they can get through because they had access to the loans. If those loans are limited and you do not have access to the loans, what chance does a person who relied on those loans, what chance would they have of becoming a physician?

Ms. DEXTER. It is not just that they will unlikely have the opportunity to be a physician. If they do choose to be a physician and have that high of a loan debt, they will go into specialty care and higher paying specialties. We have an extraordinary shortage of primary care physicians in this country, and it does not pay enough as it is for—you know, I graduated with \$150,000 in debt. Luckily, the Biden-Harris plan relieved me of that debt. I will be totally candid: I was paying for over 20 years, and that debt was just relieved a year and a half ago. I would still be paying on that, and I had already paid in excess of what my principal had been by this time because of the cost of—

Mr. SCOTT. Well, one of the problems with that “big ugly bill” is it limits the amount of loans. If you cannot come up with the cash—

Ms. DEXTER. That is right.

Mr. SCOTT [continuing]. Over what you can put together in Pell grants and loans, it is going to be at least \$50,000 maybe more than that.

Ms. DEXTER. If there is—

Mr. SCOTT. If you cannot come up with that, you cannot go.

Ms. DEXTER. I am so sorry, Mr. Ranking Member. That was very rude of me. I am obviously passionate about this area. It is also going to put people into, we will say, malicious loaning practices. Like, people who really want to be a doctor will put themselves in a position where they can be taken advantage of, and that is obviously not anything that we want people starting their career with.

Thank you, Mr. Ranking Member.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you. I yield back.

Chairman WALBERG. I thank the gentleman.

Any further questions?

Well, hearing none, I want to express appreciation to the panel coming in front of us, and certainly, these are all issues that we have addressed. We may disagree on some of them on this committee and even at the panel, but they have been taken seriously.

I would like to thank you again for testifying before the committee today.

Without objection, there being no further business, the committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 9:51 a.m., the Committee was adjourned.]
[Additional submissions from Representative Barr follows:]

THE HON. ANDY BARR, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF KENTUCKY

Chairman Walberg, thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement for the record in support of the Defend Girls Athletics Act. I am proud to lead this legislation to protect the integrity of women's sports and uphold basic principles of fairness, safety, and biological reality in our nation's schools.

Across the country, parents, students, and female athletes are raising serious concerns as biological males are increasingly allowed to compete in girls' and women's athletics. This trend is plainly unfair and undermines the purpose of Title IX, which Congress enacted more than fifty years ago. Title IX was designed to expand opportunities for women and girls, not to diminish them. Under prior federal guidance and activist policies in certain school districts and universities, women have seen their opportunities reduced, their scholarships threatened, and their accomplishments overshadowed.

President Trump recognized this growing problem and issued the Keeping Men Out of Women's Sports executive order, reaffirming that participation in female athletics must be based on biological sex. The Defend Girls Athletics Act codifies that policy and ensures that these protections cannot be weakened or reversed by a future administration. The legislation establishes a clear federal standard that schools and colleges receiving federal funds must limit participation in women's athletic programs to individuals whose biological sex is female. This standard is simple, rooted in common sense, and strongly supported by families across the nation.

To ensure accountability, the bill includes straightforward compliance measures. K-12 school districts must certify each year that they meet the federal standard, and states must verify that their districts follow the law. Schools or states that refuse to comply risk the loss of unobligated federal funds until they return to compliance. At the higher education level, colleges and universities must make the same annual certification to remain eligible for federal support, including grants and participation in federal student aid programs.

These expectations are reasonable. Institutions that receive federal taxpayer dollars should be required to uphold fairness and protect the integrity of girls' and women's sports. The legislation does not create burdensome new mandates. It simply ensures that female athletes can compete on a level playing field, without losing roster spots, scholarships, or championships to biological males.

Congress has a responsibility to uphold Title IX, defend women and girls, and ensure that federal education funding reinforces fairness, safety, and common sense.

The Defend Girls Athletics Act fulfills that responsibility with clarity and resolve. I urge my colleagues on the Committee and throughout Congress to support this essential legislation, which already has 57 cosponsors. Female athletes have waited long enough for the federal government to stand with them.

It is time to restore fairness, uphold Title IX, and defend girls' athletics nationwide.

[Additional submissions from Representative Lee follows:]

THE HON. SUSIE LEE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEVADA

Chairman Walberg, Ranking Member Scott, and members of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, thank you for providing me with the opportunity to share my perspective on issues under the Committee's jurisdiction.

I am proud product of the public education system and put myself through college with a combination of part-time jobs, scholarships, and loans. Before coming to Congress, I spent more than two decades working with Nevada schools to support students, prevent dropouts, and strengthen our public education system. As a lifelong education advocate, I know that education is the key to opportunity.

That is why I introduced the Keep Our Promise to America's Children and Teachers Act (H.R. 869) to ensure school districts in Nevada and across the country have the resources they need to strengthen opportunities for all students—regardless of the extra needs they may have or what zip code they live in.

This bill would put Congress on a fiscally responsible path to meet its obligation to fully fund Title I and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) on a mandatory basis over the next 10 years.

More than 200 schools across Nevada's Clark County School District rely on Title I funding, which gives assistance to America's highest-need schools, but the program has been seriously underfunded for decades at the federal level. From 2005 to 2017, Title I was underfunded by about \$347 billion, preventing southern Nevada schools from addressing critical issues like school safety, teacher retention, and mental health.

Similarly, chronic underfunding of IDEA has shortchanged Nevada schools by an estimated \$1.96 billion in IDEA grants between 2005 and 2017, greatly diminishing their ability to serve children with disabilities.

As elected officials, it is our responsibility to ensure all students in our communities have the resources and opportunities they need to succeed. That means we must fully fund these vital programs, not tear them apart.

While the current Administration continues to undermine access to education by dismantling the Department of Education and defunding critical programs, I remain committed to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for our communities.

Nevada currently has the fewest teachers per students in the country, with an average of 43 teachers per 1,000 students. With this shortage already straining in-classroom demands, the supply of targeted after-school resources is especially affected, emphasizing the need to support workforce development for teachers as well as fill the gap in additional tutoring needs.

To address this gap, I lead the bipartisan Partnering Aspiring Teachers with High-Need Schools (PATHS) to Tutor Act, which I will be reintroducing in the coming weeks. This bill expands access to one-on-one and small group tutoring for students in underserved communities. The legislation also leverages our existing workforce pool and creates new opportunities for future teachers by placing teacher-candidates in these tutoring roles.

By placing teacher-candidates into tutoring roles, this bill strengthens the pipeline of future teachers in the long run, while ensuring students in underserved communities receive targeted academic support in the short run.

Finally, as we aim to meet the needs of all students, it is essential that we support evidence-based methods to address in- and out-of-school barriers to learning. Community schools are key to addressing these barriers.

That is why I also lead the Full-Service Community School Expansion Act, which I will be reintroducing in the coming months. This legislation expands the Full-Service Community Schools grant program to meet the demand across the country for wraparound services to support struggling students and families.

A full-service community school is a public elementary or secondary school that participates in a community-based effort to coordinate and integrate educational, developmental, family, health, and other comprehensive services through community-based organizations and public and private partnerships; and provides in-school access to such services to students, families, and the community.

As the former President of Communities in Schools (CIS) of Nevada, I understand just how valuable the work of community schools is for their communities. CIS of Nevada is an education non-profit serving over 89,000 students annually in Clark County School District. Their programs are in over 100 schools, focusing on providing equitable access to educational resources and support. In Nevada, 99% of K-11 students involved in CIS programs were promoted to the next grade level and 96% of CIS students go on to graduate.

The model of integrated student supports (ISS) utilized by CIS is a clear example of a proven, evidence-based approach that improve educational outcomes in our communities. With trained site coordinators directly in schools, students are able to receive the resources and support they need to address their unique needs and overcome their challenges. These methods have been proven to increase students' earning potential by 4.3% and improve graduation rates by 3.4%. We must do our part to support community schools that are critical to ensuring everyone has the resources and opportunities they deserve.

I remain committed to working with my colleagues on this Committee to push forward common-sense solutions that ensure access to educational opportunities, support students and teachers, and improve outcomes for students. I encourage the Committee to provide full consideration to the Keep Our PACT Act, PATHS to Tutor Act, and Full-Service Community Schools Expansion Act.

Thank you again for providing this opportunity. I look forward to collaborating with the Committee to make life for Nevadans better.

[Additional submissions from Representative Takano follows:]

THE HON. MARK TAKANO, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Chairman Walberg, Ranking Member Scott, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony. I applaud your leadership and appreciate you allowing Members to share their priorities. In that spirit, I implore the Committee to provide robust support for student borrowers and overtime protections for hardworking Americans. It is of equal importance that we support Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) as they navigate the Trump Administration's unilateral cancellation of many of their grants and funding. All three of these issues will have a major impact on the landscape for American students and worker success in this country.

The American Dream is built on the promise of a high-quality education. We tell our students that if you work hard, you can access some of the best educational opportunities in the world and build a life-sustaining career. However, this Dream is only a reality if institutions are held accountable for providing students with a high-quality education and student borrowers are protected from predatory practices that would leave them crushed by debt.

In an era when young people are skeptical about the cost-benefit relationship to a college education and the political atmosphere has been hostile to educational institutions, Congress must demonstrate our commitment to students with targeted and thoughtful policy. This Committee is tasked with providing equal education and opportunity for every student, regardless of their background.

To that end, my legislation, the PROTECT Students Act, addresses several areas of the college experience to ensure students are safeguarded. This bill increases oversight of institutions of higher education, makes it easier for students to eliminate their loans if they were defrauded and eases the ability of students to bring class action lawsuits against for-profit universities, holds universities accountable by ensuring schools are honest about their job placement data, predatory recruitment tactics, and ensure that former fraudsters cannot prey on students again.

The PROTECT Students Act will save taxpayers millions of dollars each year by preventing student aid money being paid out to programs that do not deliver for students—programs that far too often leave students with debt they cannot afford and no degree or credential to show for it. It ensures that owners of for-profit colleges can be required to meet specified conditions through the Program Participation Agreement—the federal contract colleges and universities sign in order to receive federal aid. By creating a new metric of instructional spending, it sets out a new way of differentiating the outcomes of schools that are under resourced from schools that simply churn taxpayer aid into corporate profits and payouts. And finally, the bill restores and streamlines the rights of students who were lied to or defrauded by creating a clear and simple path for students to establish a defense to repayment.

H.R. 1 unfortunately made it harder for students and student veterans to establish that they have been defrauded—that is a deeply unfortunate consequence since ensuring students can establish they were lied to has served as a tremendous disincentive to misconduct by predatory schools. The PROTECT Students Act would fix this. In order to safeguard the future of our younger generations, we need consider this legislation immediately.

Equally important is ensuring a strong economic future for America's workforce. This country is long overdue for robust reform of the overtime threshold, which remains at a woefully low and inadequate \$35,500 per year. The first Trump Administration set this threshold, despite \$35,500 being far below a livable wage in any state in the United States. It has remained there for far too long.

I am proud to lead the Restoring Overtime Pay Act, a bill which seeks to raise the overtime threshold to a historic high of the 55th percentile of earnings for full-time salaried workers nationwide.

This effort paves the way for millions of American workers previously excluded from overtime compensation to receive overtime pay for their hours worked. It will strengthen the economy, increase workers' spending power, and take a significant step towards ensuring that the American economy works for all workers, not just those in the highest earning brackets.

We need to focus our time on putting money back in workers' pockets, and I urge the Committee to take up this bill as soon as possible.

Finally, I ask that this Committee demand explanations from Secretary of Education Linda McMahon and the Trump Administration on their decision making regarding the elimination of Minority Serving Institution (MSI) programs. Secretary

McMahon must work with Congress regarding any major action on these programs, and she and the Administration have overstepped their authority by moving forward without engaging the legislative branch.

The Department of Education announced it would cancel and reallocate funding for several MSI programs, including Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISI). MSIs are colleges and universities that enroll some of the most racially and ethnically diverse students across the United States. The Department of Education has provided funding to help colleges design and build programs to ensure their students are equipped to enter the workforce. These include programs that educate and prepare students in artificial intelligence and strengthen research capabilities.

In the State of California, there are 54 HSI, 12 MSI, and 12 AANAPISI active grant recipients. If funding is completely reallocated, California colleges and universities could lose upwards of \$50 million over the next several years. Eliminating these programs would hinder the efforts made by colleges and universities to prepare students to succeed in the evolving job market. With budgets already tight, some established programs would be difficult to replace with state funds because state dollars are primarily formula-driven and already committed to core operations and state priorities.

Secretary McMahon must agree to discuss this decision—among others—with Congress before proceeding. This will impact millions of students' ability to succeed and erode decades of progress towards making higher education more accessible and equitable.

Chairman Walberg, Ranking Member Scott, and Members of the Committee, thank you for your time and leadership. I look forward to working with you all.

